

## Vision Statement

*"The PBL is a trusted steward of the Columbia River Power System.  
We provide maximum power and environmental value  
from this world-class system to the people of the Northwest."*

## So Where Did This Vision Come From?

This PBL vision statement evolved from a process that began in the spring of 1999. PBL executives were charged with developing and presenting their vision for the business line at the agency's strategic planning retreat in April. After that first iteration, presented at the retreat, PBL executives and managers held a series of meetings with staff and dedicated themselves to shaping a vision that was "right" for the PBL. The process has involved clarifying the concepts of stewardship, trust, and maximum value, as well as viewing the people of the Northwest as beneficiaries of PBL actions.

The concept of stewardship is fundamental to the goals and strategies presented in this plan. Steward is the modern form of an old word for a person put in charge of the affairs of an estate, who oversees and administers the finances and property for the family owning the estate. For PBL, stewardship means maximizing the value of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) assets for the region, by working with our partners to oversee and administer the system for the people of the region, or in our analogy, the family that owns the estate. This translates not only to doing the right thing *technically*, but also to building and maintaining strong relationships with customers and constituents, and acting in their interests and on their behalf.

## Putting the "Trusted Steward" Vision into Practice

**How** we carry out our Trusted Steward role is one of our biggest challenges. The following comments (which most of us have heard or made) often stem from the difficulty of the Trusted Steward role:

"Our decisions are all driven by politics, so why should I bother doing good staff work?"

"We should quit trying to be all things to all people."

"We need to figure out the right thing to do and then stick to our guns -- just stand up to the political heat"

"I knocked myself out on this project, and then management ignored my work when they made the decision"

Our Trusted Steward Vision says that we can't look just at the economics or the operational issues when we make decisions, nor can we look just at what our regional "family" wants us to do. We have to look at both. The frustration expressed in the quotes above often happens because people are looking at just one part of the picture. Sometimes managers focus heavily on the views of external parties and lose sight of the

economic and technical issues. Sometime staff focus on the economic or technical merits and discount the external views as “just politics”.

What’s the solution? A partial solution is for everyone who is making or supporting the business decisions to put themselves in the Steward’s shoes. To make this a little more specific, being in the Steward’s shoes means asking yourself the following 5 questions before making a decision or a recommendation on an issue:

- **Business/Finance.** Do I understand the impact of the decision on customer satisfaction, creditor/investor relations, rates, reliability, costs, revenues, capital investment criteria, risk management criteria, etc?
- **Legal.** Do I understand the legal issues, and especially the legal risks, connected with the decision?
- **Environment.** Do I understand the impact of the decision on fish and wildlife goals, energy efficiency goals, renewables resource development goals?
- **External views.** Do I understand clearly what others outside of BPA think about the issue, and why – customers, customer groups, state and local government, environmental groups, elected officials, tribes, consumer groups, etc?
- **BPA people.** Do I understand the impact of the decision on co-workers and BPA staff generally, and on our HPO Vision?

Whether we are executives, line managers, project managers, process managers, or team members, being “trusted stewards” means asking ourselves these five questions honestly when we are dealing with a tough issue. If our answer is “yes, I understand”, then the last step is to make sure that we are doing everything we can to make decisions that address these five different interests. This last step is often tough, but it is the essence of stewardship.

# Sr. Vice President's Letter to Employees

Dear PBL Employee,

In the PBL, we live with five basic truths:

1. We manage one of the greatest power systems in the world, along with our partners the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Energy Northwest.
2. This system is a cornerstone of the region's economic and environmental health, and it makes the region a better place to live by keeping our air clean and our power rates low. Our actions in managing this system are a vital part of that equation.
3. We manage the power system for the people of the Northwest. Even though we report to Washington D.C., the law directs us to operate for the benefit of the region, and we do.
4. The people of the Northwest, for whom we manage the system, are like most families – the members aren't perfect and they don't always get along or agree with each other. That sometimes makes our job very difficult, but we act in the best interests of our family.
5. Storm clouds and threats to the region's ability to continue to realize the benefits of the system loom on the horizon. There are people in the region and elsewhere in the country who believe they could do a better job than BPA of managing the system.

These five truths drive the Vision we have crafted for the PBL:

***The PBL is a trusted steward of the Columbia River Power System.  
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We have to remain a trusted steward of the system because that is what the region will continue to demand – and it is a very reasonable demand for the region to make of us.

We are a trusted steward when we:

- Deliver maximum value from the system – and we deliver many different types of value
- Listen carefully, consider thoughtfully, and attempt seriously to accommodate the interests of all members of the regional family. Listening, considering, and accommodating disparate interests can be difficult and frustrating, but it is a crucial part of our work, and it is key to being a trusted steward.

From long experience, we know a lot about what our regional “family” expects from us. A partial list of these expectations follows, without any attempt to prioritize. These expectations are the things that are often referred-to as our “public responsibilities:”

- Power at Cost
- Regional Hydroelectric System Coordination
- Public & Regional Preference in the sale of power
- Fish and Wildlife mitigation, enhancement, and recovery
- Energy Conservation
- Reliability of power supply
- Renewable Energy resource development
- Compliance with Environmental Statutes
- Repayment of our debt to bondholders and federal taxpayers, on-time and in-full
- Mitigation for impacts on tribal cultural sites
- Columbia River Treaty Administration
- Open public Decisionmaking

The PBL Strategic Plan is our blueprint for successfully implementing the PBL vision and the agency’s mission. It is the small steps, and sometimes large steps, taking us toward continuing to be that trusted steward and continuing to provide the maximum value to the Northwest. This strategic plan belongs to all of us in the PBL and must be implemented by all of us. Realizing the vision will take all of our efforts.

We do amazing work for the region, and now more than ever, it is critical that we do our jobs well. Millions of people depend on us. And we cannot lose sight of the fact – no matter how thankless our job may seem at times – that the benefits we deliver to the region are at risk. It is crucial that we have the trust of our Northwest family.

We can't say yes to every demand, but we can listen, understand others points of view, and respond and follow through. As we implement our strategic plan, it must be in the spirit of continually "renewing" our stewardship agreement with the citizens of the Northwest.

Sincerely,